

Wartime Anson Wreckage Recovered From NG Jungle

Two RAAF officers whose remains were recovered from the wreckage of a wartime Anson aircraft in New Guinea last month were buried at Bomana War Cemetery, Port Moresby, on March 5.

They were Gp Capt Frederick J. B. Wight and Wg Cdr Walter L. Hammond.

The RAAF was represented at the funeral service by Gp Capt D. D. Hurditch, Senior RAAF officer for Northern Queensland and Officer Commanding RAAF Base Townsville.

The RAAF search party was led by Wg Cdr K. M. Rundle, of Townsville, who has been active in numerous similar searches in New Guinea, and Gp Capt A. R. Hodge, of Canberra, who previously commanded the RAAF Base at Townsville and is particularly familiar with the Port Moresby terrain.

The Anson disappeared shortly after taking off from Port Moresby on January 30, 1944, on a flight to Nadzab.

The wreckage was recovered at about 10,000 ft, only 600 ft from the top of Mount Kenevi, and in a particularly hazardous position for the searchers to reach it.

The search party had to operate under hazardous conditions, including heavy rain, poor visibility and, at times, lack of oxygen.

The party first located the wreckage on the lip of a jungle-covered cliff face with a sheer drop of some 3,000 ft. Recovery of the bodies was partially

completed when the rescue party was forced to withdraw due to heavy rain, extreme cold and lack of oxygen. At first light the following day, the rescue party again returned to the scene of its operations. On this occasion it was necessary for members of the party to be secured by safety ropes anchored to trees.

On return to base camp the remains were air lifted by RAAF Iroquois helicopters to Port Moresby.